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Programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003

The situation in Central America: procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace and progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/57/L.27/Rev.1

Twenty-second report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement submitted by the Secretary-General (A/C.5/57/30) in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the budget implications of draft resolution A/57/L.27/Rev.1 on the United Nations Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). During its consideration of the item, the Committee met with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guatemala and other representatives of the Secretary-General.

2. As indicated in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the statement of the Secretary-General, the current phase of operation of MINUGUA is to continue throughout 2003 in support of consolidating the progress achieved under the peace agreements. During 2002, the Mission has continued to carry out its mandate to verify compliance with the peace agreements, provide technical assistance, offer good offices and inform the public about its activities and results of the verification. Should the General Assembly decide to adopt draft resolution A/57/L.27/Rev.1, thus extending the mandate of the Mission until 31 December 2003, the Mission would continue to carry out the activities as described in the report of the Secretary-General dated 1 November 2002 (A/57/584), in which the Secretary-General recommends a renewal of the mandate of MINUGUA for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2003.

3. The structure of the Mission is discussed in paragraphs 6 to 16 of the statement. MINUGUA would continue to carry its mandate in 2003 at a reduced

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level, as compared with 2002. The verification of the peace agreements would continue to be organized around four main areas: human rights, indigenous rights, the strengthening of civilian power, and economic policy and rural development (see A/C.5/57/30, para. 12). The Committee was informed that the budget proposal for 2003 is designed to achieve two fundamental goals. The first is to continue the agreed-upon pattern of budget reductions leading towards closure that began in previous years. The second is to permit MINUGUA to continue to fulfil its traditional mandate, while also engaging in a transition programme that would help prepare other actors to carry out the peace agenda after the Mission leaves. The Committee was informed that this transition programme emphasizes cooperation with national institutions and it also includes an important role for agencies and programmes of the United Nations system. The Committee was informed that the current planning assumes the Mission would terminate its mandate at the end of 2003. The Committee notes that the Government of Guatemala has requested an extension of the mandate of MINUGUA into 2004 (see A/57/584, para. 31). The Advisory Committee also notes the provisions of paragraphs 24 and 25 of draft resolution A/57/L.27/Rev.1. **In this connection, and bearing in mind the comments above, the Committee welcomes the information given to it that the Mission would begin to plan for eventual liquidation.**

4. As shown in annex I to the statement, estimated requirements of the Mission for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2003 amount to $11,602,900 net ($12,961,900 gross), representing a reduction in provisions for 2003 of $3,152,200 net or about 21 per cent, as compared with 2002 appropriations. The Committee notes from annex V to the statement that expenditure for the one-year period ending 31 December 2002 is estimated at $14,783,600, resulting in an estimated deficit of $28,500, as compared with $14,755,100 appropriated for MINUGUA for the period from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2002.

5. As shown in annex I to the statement, total civilian personnel costs amount to $9,606,300 for 2003, as compared with $11,868,600 appropriated for 2002. A total of 233 posts are proposed for MINUGUA for 2003, comprising 53 international staff (41 Professional, 10 General Service and 2 Field Service), 6 National Officers, 118 other local-level staff and 56 United Nations Volunteers. As compared with the staffing table approved for 2002, there is a proposed reduction of 38 posts, comprising a decrease of 16 international posts (7 Professional, 7 General Service and 2 Field Service), 16 local-level posts and 7 United Nations Volunteers, partially offset by the addition of one new National Officer (see A/C.5/57/30, para. 17 and annex I. B). Vacancy factors of 17.5 and 3 per cent for international and local staff, respectively, have been used in estimating the staff costs.

6. The Advisory Committee was informed that the bulk of the reduction in personnel for 2003 would come from cuts in substantive and administrative personnel in the Guatemala City headquarters. Military observers would be discontinued and the number of police observers would be reduced from ten in 2002 to six in 2003. One police observer would remain in each regional office to participate in the verification of human rights cases. Annex IV to the statement shows the proposed staffing by organizational unit for MINUGUA for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2003.

7. The Advisory Committee was informed that the regional office structure would remain intact in 2003. It is expected that the most important transition work will be

done in the field. The increased transition activities, aimed at strengthening local actors such as the office of the Human Rights Ombudsman and the departmental development councils, will dictate more selective verification work in the field. The Committee was also informed that the largest field office, in Guatemala City, has been moved out of headquarters and into a more central neighbourhood, facilitating access by the population and contact with transition partners. The Committee was informed that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has expressed interest in merging efforts to verify indigenous rights and is considering the opening of an OHCHR office with a broad human rights mandate after MINUGUA leaves. Plans are also being developed to allow monitoring and reporting on socio-economic issues to be increasingly assumed by programmes and agencies of the United Nations system. **The Committee stresses the importance of such participation in the transition period and the phasing out of the Mission.**

8. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 14 of the statement that a new mission history and lessons learned unit would be established to ensure that the experience of MINUGUA would be adequately documented and analysed. The Committee was informed that with the creation of the unit, MINUGUA would be making a serious effort to document its nearly decade-long experience in Guatemala and develop lessons learned for the benefit of Guatemalan audiences and future United Nations peacekeeping operations. **The Committee trusts that the work of the unit would be completed within a one-year period, as envisaged and calls for very close cooperation between this unit and the Lessons Learned Unit in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.**

9. The estimated operational costs for MINUGUA amount to $1,920,300 for 2003, as compared with $2,432,200 appropriated for 2002, and estimates for other programmes amount to $257,000 for 2003, as compared with $314,800 appropriated for 2002 (A/C.5/57/30, annex I). The Committee notes that the requirements for transport operations are estimated at a reduced level (A/C.5/57/30, annex I.C., para. 10). The Committee was informed that MINUGUA would maintain a vehicle fleet of 98 vehicles in 2003, as compared with 128 vehicles in 2002.

10. The Advisory Committee notes the information contained in annex III to the statement on the use of extrabudgetary resources and the Trust Fund for the Guatemala Peace Process. Allocations from the Trust Fund for various activities in support of the mandate of the Mission amount to $1.2 million. For 2003, it is anticipated that, based on the contributions already approved or under negotiation with donors, an estimated amount of $682,700 would be made available.

11. **The Fifth Committee may wish to inform the General Assembly that, should it adopt draft resolution A/57/L.27, additional appropriations would be required for the programme budget for the biennium 2002-2003 in the amount of $11,631,400 under section 3, Political affairs, and an amount of $1,359,000 under section 32, Staff assessment, to be offset by the corresponding amount under income section 1, Income from staff assessment.**